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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2715
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6469
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4253
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2858
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7430
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1477
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4812
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1039
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7162

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 005453

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Syria/AL, Syria/OIC, Syria/Japan, Syria/Yemen, Iran,
Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian Territories (12/22-24)

¶1. Summary: On Dec. 24 Syrian press reported President Asad's Dec 21 meeting with SecGen of the Arab League Amr Mousa in which Mousa briefed Asad on the consultations he conducted on behalf of the AL regarding developments on the Lebanese arena. Headlines featured President Asad's support for the efforts of the Arab League and everything the Lebanese agree upon because Syria is keen on the stability, safety and security of Lebanon. Secretary General of the Arab League reiterated the importance of heading towards getting out of this problem by the consensus of all Lebanese without denying the existence of international effects on the Lebanese situation. FM Mouallem also attended this meeting.

Papers also reported Foreign Minister Mouallem's meeting on Dec. 23 with Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which focused on the latest regional developments, including dangerous developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. Both sides agreed upon the need for supporting efforts to form a Palestinian national unity government. They also reviewed the latest developments in reforming the OIC.

On Syrian-Japanese relations, papers featured a statement by Japanese Ambassador in Damascus Masaki Neoida saying that his country was determined to play a role in the Middle East peace process. The Japanese Ambassador said at a reception on the occasion of his country's National Day that his mission as an ambassador in Syria was to enhance and strengthen the excellent relations between the two countries in political, diplomatic, economic and other fields.

On Syrian-Yemeni relations, papers reported the visit to Yemen by Abudlla Al-Ahmar, Assistant Secretary General of the Bath Arab Socialist Party. In a statement to SABA news agency of Yemen, Al-Ahmar said the visit comes within the framework of cooperation between the Bath Arab Socialist Party and the General People's Congress (GPC) of Yemen and it constitutes a new step contributing to the development of cooperative relations between the two parties and sisterly countries.

On December 23 government-owned Tishreen cited a statement by Ma'n Hamiyah, the media spokesman for the Syrian Social National Party,

that said the raids on SSNP offices and houses of party members conducted by Lebanese security forces in northern Lebanon sought to cover up the Israeli Mosad activities in Lebanon and failure of the security forces to maintain security. He stressed that the weapons confiscated from houses of SSNP members were used in the resistance against the Israeli occupation.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"AL SecGen Mousa from Beirut: The visit to Syria has helped in finding a solution. A sit-in in solidarity with New TV calls for the release of the two New TV journalists investigating the Israeli conspiracy. Lebanese figures and MPs call for foiling the foreign sedition scheme" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/24)

"Foreign Minister Mouallem and OIC Secretary General Oglu support efforts to form a Palestinian national unity government. Oglu: Syria has effective state in the Islamic Conference" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/24)

"Assistant Secretary General of al-Baath Arab Socialist Party al-Ahmar takes part in the Conference of al-Baath Party in Yemen. Al-Ahmar reviews the latest developments in the region and reiterates Syria's support for Arab causes" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/24)

"The UN Security Council endorses UNSC resolution 1737 imposing sanctions on Iran. Tehran describes the resolution as illegal and in violation of the UN Charter" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/24)

"Escalation continues in the Palestinian arena... The Quartet extends its help, but through Abbas. Hamas and Fateh renew readiness to hold a new dialogue" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/24)

"US Secretary of Defense Gates briefs President Bush on the outcome of his visit to Iraq. Deterioration of security still the major challenge" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/24)

"Abdullah Al-Ahmar, Assistant Secretary General of the Baath Arab Socialist Party, in Sanaa for talks with the General People's Congress (GPC) of Yemen" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/23)

"Has the Arab initiative reached a dead end? Extensive condemnation of measures imposed by the Lebanese ruling team against the Syrian Social National Party. Lebanese former Premier al-Hoss: The problem lies in the government's abnormal situation. Former Lebanese Minister and MP Franjeh: The February 14 forces work in accordance with a US agenda" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/23)

"A media source from the Syrian Social National Party clarifies to Tishreen: The confiscated arms were used to resist occupation. The aim of raids against the SSNP is to cover up Mosad activities and the security forces' failure" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/23)

"Five US troops killed in attacks and clashes in al-Anbar. US Defense Secretary Gates concludes fact-finding mission in Iraq preferring to keep his recommendations for President Bush" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/23)

"Bush seeks to deepen sedition inside Palestine. Security chaos returns to street. Palestinian Prime Minister Hanieh responds to Palestinian President Abbas: We are ready for dialogue immediately" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/23)

"Organization of 'The Right of Return' commences its work in Lebanon: A holy right, no solution without the right of return" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/23)

"President Asad to Amr Mousa: Syria supports the Arab League efforts and is concerned about Lebanon's stability and safety. Arab League SecGen: Syria always supports Lebanese national reconciliation and exerts efforts to maintain Palestinian national unity" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/22)

"United Nations General Assembly calls on Israel not to exploit natural resources of the Golan" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/22)

"Mashaal of Hamas: There is no alternative for a Palestinian national unity government" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/22)

"British daily 'The Independent': Blair did not make any breakthrough in recent tour of the Middle East" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/22)

"Russian News Agency Novosti: Western media deliberately intended to cause harm to Syria due to rejection of US dictates" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/22)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Sinking in Sick Dreams"

Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (12/23): "Robert Gates, the new US Secretary of Defense, tells us that the American armies are staying 'here' for a long time! 'Here', of course, means the Arab region...."

"It is as if the Baker-Hamilton report never existed. It appears that the Bush administration does not listen to the sensible American voices or respect the views of the American public, which gave this administration a zero score in its management of international affairs and in its foreign policy, which brought disgrace upon the Americans and tragedies and disasters upon the world.

"Gates' statements coincided with statements by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice admitting that violence in Iraq is continuing. They also coincided with the indictment against eight American soldiers for involvement in a heinous crime in the Iraqi city of Hadithah, in which 24 Iraqi civilians were killed in cold blood...."

"We are linking the political positions of the Bush administration toward the region with this violence and these massacres in order to remind the warmongers and the proponents of the theories of domination, creative instability, preemptive wars, and promotion of canned democracy through missiles and warships that these policies and positions have failed to realize any declared or undeclared American objective, let alone the fact that they are outside history and logic, that they disregard the will of nations, and that they are rejected by the overwhelming majority of the American people.

"This American insistence on such reckless and irresponsible policies shows that neoconservatives will not raise the white flag in their failing wars, and that they are putting at stake what they do not own: the reputation of Americans and the lives and capabilities of the nations of the world.

"The Bush administration has thrown the Baker-Hamilton report in the dust bin and refused to listen to the voice of the American people, who punished the Republican Party for the administration's policies and failures and withdrew the majority that the party had in Congress.

"Today there is unanimity in the region and the world, and even inside the United States, that the Bush administration has failed in its entire work in the past six years. Yet this administration sticks to the language of threats, force, and saber rattling, from Afghanistan to Iraq, to supporting the Israeli terrorism and wagering on a Lebanese team that the Lebanese people have rejected.

"We believe time has come for the administration of the neoconservatives to wake up from its sick dreams and listen, if only for once, to the voice of the nations of the world."

"Lies on the Holocaust, Who Dares to Expose Them?"

Salim Abbud, a columnist in government-owned Al-Thawra wrote (12/22): "Tehran's conference on the holocaust was a serious and courageous scientific attempt to remove the ambiguity and reveal the truth about the holocaust at a time the West considers discussion of this issue a taboo....

"The West, which always talks about justice and human rights, allows people to discuss, research, and investigate any fact in this world but prohibits, incriminates, and punishes anyone who thinks of investigating the truth of the Holocaust.... We regret that most of the Arab media and researchers do not discuss the truth of the Holocaust and how Arabs are footing its bill (Palestine) and ignore the current holocaust that the Zionists are daily practicing against Palestinians with American and European support and blessing....

"Those who condemned Tehran conference: If the holocaust was a fact, why shouldn't the Tehran conference be seen as a creditable attempt to reveal it, generalize it worldwide, and stop the skepticism over it?

"The European and American positions toward the Holocaust, show the extent to which Zionist thought has infiltrated the minds of the political, cultural, and judicial leaders and driven them to adopt such a position toward the holocaust lie...."

ROEBUCK